

Content and Evidence Document Summary

October 2026

North Herts Council

North Herts Council





HOMES

Building Inclusive Communities for the Future

Good quality homes are the foundation for thriving places. Our new Local Plan will set out how and where new homes are delivered across North Herts to meet the needs of current and future generations while supporting healthy, connected and sustainable communities.

01 Meeting our housing needs

We need to plan for the right number of homes, in the right places, supported by the right infrastructure.

Over 11,000 homes needed by 2040

We need to plan for around around 11,000 new homes between 2029 and 2040 to meet local needs.

Delivering homes in the right places

New homes should be located in sustainable locations, well connected to services, jobs, shops and public transport.

Maintaining a housing land supply

We need to make sure there is a sufficient supply of deliverable sites to meet housing needs in the short, medium and long term.

02 Affordable housing

We want to deliver more affordable homes and support local people to access them.

More affordable homes

We aim to deliver more affordable homes, including social rented homes and affordable home ownership options, to meet the needs of our communities.

Social rent

We are considering the right balance and mix of affordable tenures, including social rent to ensure homes are accessible to those who need them most.

Supporting local people to stay local

We want to help local people, including young families to be able to live and build their futures in North Hertfordshire.

03 Homes for everyone

We need a diverse range of homes to meet the needs of all our residents, now and in the future.

Accessible and adaptable homes

We want new homes to be accessible and adaptable, helping people to live independently and remain in their communities as their needs change.

Older persons housing

With an ageing population, we need to plan for more homes that meet the needs of older residents, including accessible and supported housing options.

Housing to Meet a Range of Needs and Self-Build

We want to provide for a range of housing needs, including those of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, as well as people requiring supported housing and care accommodation, while also creating opportunities for self-build and custom housebuilding.

Find out more and have your say

www.north-herts.gov.uk/new-local-plan

North Herts Council





ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Supporting a Thriving Local Economy

North Herts has a diverse economy with strong connections. Our new Local Plan will support businesses to grow and invest, provide opportunities for local jobs, and make the most of our connections to neighbouring economic centres while supporting a resilient and sustainable economy.

01 A strong local economy

North Herts has a diverse economy, with strong connections to major employment and economic centres.

Over 6,200 local businesses

North Herts is home to around 6,225 businesses and approximately 66,000 jobs. The vast majority of businesses are micro and small enterprises.

Connected to London and Cambridge

Our location between London and Cambridge, together with strong roads and rail links, provides access to major labour markets, investment and economic opportunities.

Supporting innovation and growth

We want to support changing ways of working, new technologies and investment in growing sectors, while strengthening the skills and opportunities available to local people.

02 Space for growth

We need the right land and premises to allow existing businesses to grow, attract investment and support future employment.

Meeting employment needs

Evidence shows a shortage of suitable "move-on" and "grow-on" space, making it harder for successful local businesses to expand without relocating elsewhere.

Protecting employment land

Existing employment areas play an important role in supporting jobs and economic activity. We are considering how these areas should be protected, renewed and modernised.

Planning for future industries

Potential new employment sites could meet local needs and may also support wider strategic uses such as logistics, advanced manufacturing and distribution

03 A diverse economy

Our economy is more than traditional employment sites. Tourism, rural businesses and our distinctive places all contribute to North Herts' prosperity.

Growing the visitor economy

Our historic towns, countryside, heritage attractions and cultural assets provide opportunities to attract more visitors, encourage longer stays and support local businesses.

Sustainable tourism

We want to support tourism that celebrates our countryside, nature and heritage while protecting the environment and the character of local communities.

Making the most of major attractions

Places such as Knebworth House and Hitchin Lavender, alongside connections to London Luton Airport and future attractions such as Universal Studios, provide opportunities to strengthen North Herts' visitor economy.

Find out more and have your say

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North Herts Council





TOWN CENTRES

Vibrant Centres for Our Communities

North Herts' town centres are at the heart of our communities, providing places to shop, work, meet, access services and spend leisure time. Our new Local Plan will help town centres adapt to changing needs while remaining vibrant, welcoming and distinctive places.

01 Thriving town centres

We want our town centres to continue to thrive while recognising the different roles they play in serving residents, businesses and visitors.

Supporting our towns

Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Royston each have their own character and role. We want to protect these identities while supporting successful and resilient centres.

Focusing activity in the right places

We are reviewing our town centre boundaries to reflect how our centres are used today and focus retail in the core with more diverse activities at the edges.

Planning for future needs

Changing shopping habits and businesses needs mean our centres must continue to evolve. We will use updated evidence on retail, leisure and town centre needs to help plan for their long-term success.

02 More than shopping

Town centres are changing. We want them to offer a wider mix of activities and experiences that keep people visiting throughout the day and evening.

A wider mix of uses

Leisure, culture, community facilities, cafés, restaurants, flexible workspaces and other uses can complement shops and create more active and resilient town centres.

Bringing empty spaces back to life

Meanwhile uses can give vacant buildings and spaces temporary new purpose, supporting local businesses, community activities, markets, events and creative uses.

A vibrant evening economy

Restaurants, cafés, pubs, entertainment and cultural activities can support local businesses and create lively town centres after traditional shopping hours, while respecting nearby residents.

03 Welcoming and connected

Successful town centres should be attractive, accessible and easy to move around, creating places where people want to spend more time.

Better public spaces

Improvements to streets, public spaces, signage, planting and wayfinding can create safer, more attractive and welcoming town centres.

Walking, cycling and public transport

We want to make it easier to reach and move around our centres on foot, by bike and by public transport, while maintaining appropriate vehicle access.

Supporting community wellbeing

Town centres are also places where communities access services and support. We are considering opportunities for Neighbourhood Health Hubs that bring health and wellbeing services together closer to where people live.

Find out more and have your say

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North Herts Council



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Protecting and Enhancing Nature

North Herts' natural environment supports wildlife, healthy communities and the character of our towns and countryside. Our new Local Plan will help protect and enhance biodiversity, landscapes, rivers and green spaces, while ensuring new development contributes positively to nature.



01 Protecting nature

We want to protect habitats and wildlife while creating opportunities for nature to recover and thrive.

Biodiversity Net Gain

New development must deliver up to 10% Biodiversity Net Gain. We are considering whether some allocated sites should deliver more where this is justified, viable and achievable.

Protecting habitats

Important wildlife sites, habitats and ecological networks should be protected and connected. We are considering retaining appropriate buffers between new development and sensitive habitats.

Nature recovery

We will use the Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategies to identy important areas where habitats can be protected, restored and better connected to create a stronger network for nature.

02 Valued landscapes

Our landscapes and countryside are an important part of North Herts' identity and need to be considered as our District grows.

Locally valued landscapes

We are considering designating locally valued landscape next to the Chilterns National Landscape to recognise and protect its distinctive character.

Protecting agricultural land

High-quality agricultural land supports food production and the rural economy. We will consider agricultural land quality when deciding which sites are suitable for development.

The Chilterns landscape

The Chilterns National Landscape is an important part of the District. Development must respond sensitively to its landscape character, setting and environmental value.

03 Greener places

Connecting green spaces, rivers and trees can benefit the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Green and blue networks

We want to protect and improve our networks of parks, woodlands, rivers and other green and blue spaces, while creating new connections through future development.

Protecting our chalk streams

North Herts contains internationally rare chalk streams. We are proposing a minimum 10-metre undeveloped buffer alongside chalk streams and other rivers to help protect these important habitats.

Greener development

We are considering Urban Greening Factor and tree canopy standards to ensure new development provides sufficient green space, vegetation and trees.

Find out more and have your say

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North Herts Council





CLIMATE CHANGE

A low-carbon and climate-resilient future

Our new Local Plan will tackle climate change by helping reducing emissions, supporting cleaner energy and making development more resilient. It will also help us respond to increasing pressures on water resources and flood risk.

01 Reducing emissions

We want to support the transition to cleaner energy, better air quality and new infrastructure that reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Cleaner air

We think Air Quality Assessments should be provided if a development significantly affects air quality and sensitive uses.

Renewable and community energy

We want to support renewable and low-carbon energy generation, including community energy schemes that allow local people and organisations to develop, own or benefit from clean energy projects.

Storing and sharing energy

Battery storage can store renewable electricity until it is needed, while heat networks can provide lower-carbon heating to multiple buildings. Our Local Plan could support both in suitable locations.

02 Buildings & resources

We want to encourage more energy-efficient development while reducing the carbon and waste associated with buildings.

Energy efficient buildings

New homes and buildings should be designed to use less energy, reducing carbon emissions while helping residents and businesses lower their running costs.

Reusing existing buildings

Retrofitting and refurbishing existing buildings can help reduce embodied carbon emissions, avoid unnecessary waste and preserve the character of existing places.

Circular economy

Using materials more efficiently and reducing construction waste can help lower the environmental impact of development and support a more sustainable approach to growth.

03 Water & climate resilience

Climate change is an increasing pressure on water and its availability. New development should use water efficiently to adapt to future conditions.

Using less water

North Herts is an area of serious water stress. We are proposing stronger water-efficiency standards for new homes and are considering technologies such as greywater recycling.

Protecting our water

Our rivers and groundwater provide important habitats and drinking water. New development needs to protect these resources and help improve water quality across our District.

Reducing flood risk

Climate change is expected to increase flooding from rivers, surface water and groundwater. New development should be located and designed to remain safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

Find out more and have your say

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North Herts Council



TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY

Creating places that are easier to get around

Where we build homes, jobs and services affects how people travel. Our new Local Plan should help create well-connected communities where walking, cycling and public transport are realistic choices, while managing the impacts of car travel.

01 Connected communities

We want new homes to have good access to everyday services and sustainable transport, giving people more choice in how they travel.

Everyday needs within reach

We want new developments to be located where people can easily reach schools, shops and other everyday services, reducing the need to travel longer distances by car.

Well-connected development

We want to ensure new development is well-connected to safe walking and cycling routes and the public transport network.

Better bus connections

Bus use has declined across Hertfordshire. We want new developments to have better access to bus services.

02 Sustainable travel

Our Local Plan can help encourage more sustainable ways to travel through better routes, facilities and new options such as shared mobility and travel hubs.

Walking & cycling

Many short journeys are still made by car. Better walking and cycling routes, safe crossings and secure cycle parking can make active travel a more convenient choice.

Shared travel options

Larger developments could provide space for shared mobility hubs, including cycles, e-bikes and cargo bikes. Car clubs can also provide access to a vehicle without requiring every household to own one.

Travel hubs

Travel hubs bring different ways of travelling together in one convenient location. We are considering safeguarding land for these hubs in towns.

03 Managing movement

We need to manage parking and vehicle movements so that new development works efficiently without creating congestion or using more land.

Getting parking right

Parking affects how well land is used. We are considering more shared and off-plot parking, with provision reflecting accessibility, housing type and local levels of car ownership.

Planning for deliveries

Online shopping has increased delivery traffic. New development needs suitable loading areas, while distribution and consolidation hubs could help reduce the impacts of 'last-mile' deliveries.

Managing transport impacts

New development may need measures such as improved walking and cycling routes, bus facilities and safer junctions. We are also considering a 'Monitor and Manage' approach to travel impacts where appropriate.

Find out more and have your say

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North Herts Council





COMMUNITIES AND PLACEMAKING

Healthy, inclusive and well-designed places

Our Local Plan can help create where people can live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives. This means planning for accessible services and open spaces, supporting health and wellbeing, and ensuring new development is well designed and responds to the needs of our communities.

01 Healthy communities

Where we live can have a significant impact on our physical and mental health.

Health in all policies

We are proposing a 'Health in All Policies' approach, making health and wellbeing an important consideration across housing, transport, the environment and other areas of our Local Plan.

Active and connected communities

Places that make it easier to walk, cycle, access nature and meet other people can support healthier lifestyles, social interaction and good mental health and wellbeing.

Inclusive places

Our communities include people of different ages, abilities and needs. New development should create safe, accessible and inclusive environments that help reduce health inequalities.

02 Spaces and services

As North Herts grows, communities need access to open spaces, facilities and infrastructure that support everyday life.

Open & local green spaces

Access to leisure, community, recreational and open spaces can positively benefit our residents.

Social infrastructure

New homes and jobs need to be supported by facilities such as schools, healthcare, community facilities, sports and leisure provision.

Accessible public facilities

Public toilets including accessible and change place facilities can make it easier for everyone to use community spaces independently and with dignity.

03 Designing great places

Good design can help create attractive, accessible and distinctive places that work well for both existing and future communities.

Designing for everyone

Development should include high quality open spaces, accessible streets and efficient use of land.

Local character

More detailed design codes could provide guidance for particular types of development, helping new buildings and places respond appropriately to their surroundings and local character.

Planning larger developments

Masterplans can coordinate homes, infrastructure, open spaces, facilities and transport connections so that larger developments are planned as complete neighbourhoods rather than in isolation.

Find out more and have your say

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North Herts Council





COMMUNICATIONS AND UTILITIES

Infrastructure to support sustainable growth

New homes and jobs need to be supported by the right infrastructure and services. As North Herts grows, this will place higher demands on water supply, wastewater, energy and digital services. Our Local Plan will work closely with infrastructure providers to understand future needs, identify capacity constraints and ensure new development is supported by appropriate infrastructure.

01 Waste and wastewater

New development places demand on water supply and wastewater networks.

Water supply

We will work with water providers to understand future demand, promote water efficiency and ensure planned growth can be supported.

Wastewater & sewerage

We will work with providers to help them identify constraints and infrastructure improvements where appropriate.

Water Cycle Strategy

A new Water Cycle Strategy will look at water supply, wastewater capacity, water quality and flood risk to help ensure growth can be delivered sustianably.

02 Energy and waste

Growth will need resilient energy networks and appropriate waste infrastructure as North Herts moves towards a lower-carbon future.

Electricity

Demand for electricity is expected to increase as transport and heating become more electrified, requiring providers to invest in the local network.

Future energy

Energy infrastructure will continue to change as we move towards net zero, including greater use of renewable electricity, low-carbon heating and alternative gases.

Waste and recyling

We need sufficient waste infrastructure to support homes and businesses while increasing recyling, reducing waste and supporting a more circular economy.

03 Digital connectivity

Fast and reliable digital infrastructure is increasingly essential for residents, businesses and public services

Better connectivity

High-quality broadband and mobile networks support employment, education, healthcare, businesses and access to services while enabling more people to work flexibly.

Planning for digital infrastructure

Our Local Plan will consider digital connectivity alongside other infrastructure so that new development has access to the networks it needs.

Data centres

Growing demand for digital services is increasing interest in data centres. We need to consider how future development should be planned while managing demands on land, water and electricity infrastructure.

Find out more and have your say

www.north-herts.gov.uk/new-local-plan

North Herts Council





A PLACE-BASED STRATEGY FOR NORTH HERTS

Planning where and how North Herts grows

Our spatial strategy will guide where new homes, jobs and infrastructure should be located across North Herts. It needs to balance the amount of development required with access to services and transport, infrastructure capacity and environmental considerations. We are exploring different ways of distributing growth to create sustainable communities while making the best use of available land.

01 Planning for growth

We need to plan for enough homes and supporting development to meet North Herts' future needs.

Meeting housing needs

We need to plan for enough homes that meet a range of needs. This means homes for everyone; younger people, families, older people and G&T.

Finding suitable sites

Sites submitted through the Call for Sites are being assessed against planning, environmental, infrastructure and sustainability considerations to help identify land that could be suitable for development.

Planning beyond our boundaries

Growth does not stop at our District boundaries. We need to consider the wider area and work with neighbouring authorities when planning for housing, employment, infrastructure and the environment.

02 Choosing growth

We are exploring how growth could be distributed across our towns and villages in the most sustainable way.

Settlement hierarchy

We are reviewing our settlement hierarchy using factors such as access to services, facilities, public transport and digital connectivity to understand which places are best able to accommodate growth

Different growth options

We are considering a combination of urban infill, urban expansion and dispersed village growth, balancing opportunities to meet development needs with impacts on communities, infrastructure and the environment.

New settlements

A new settlement could support long-term growth, but this is beyond this Local Plan period and would need to be considered through the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS).

03 Efficient land use

We want to make efficient use of available land, including brownfield sites, while creating high-quality places.

Brownfield first

Reusing previously developed land, including vacant or underused sites, can help provide new homes while reducing the need to develop greenfield land.

Using land efficiently

We want development to make good use of available land through appropriate densities, design and mixed uses, while maintaining high-quality places to live.

Housing densities

We are proposing a range of minimum densities for our towns, town centres, wider towns and urban extensions and larger villages to help make more efficient use of land in locations with good access to services and transport.

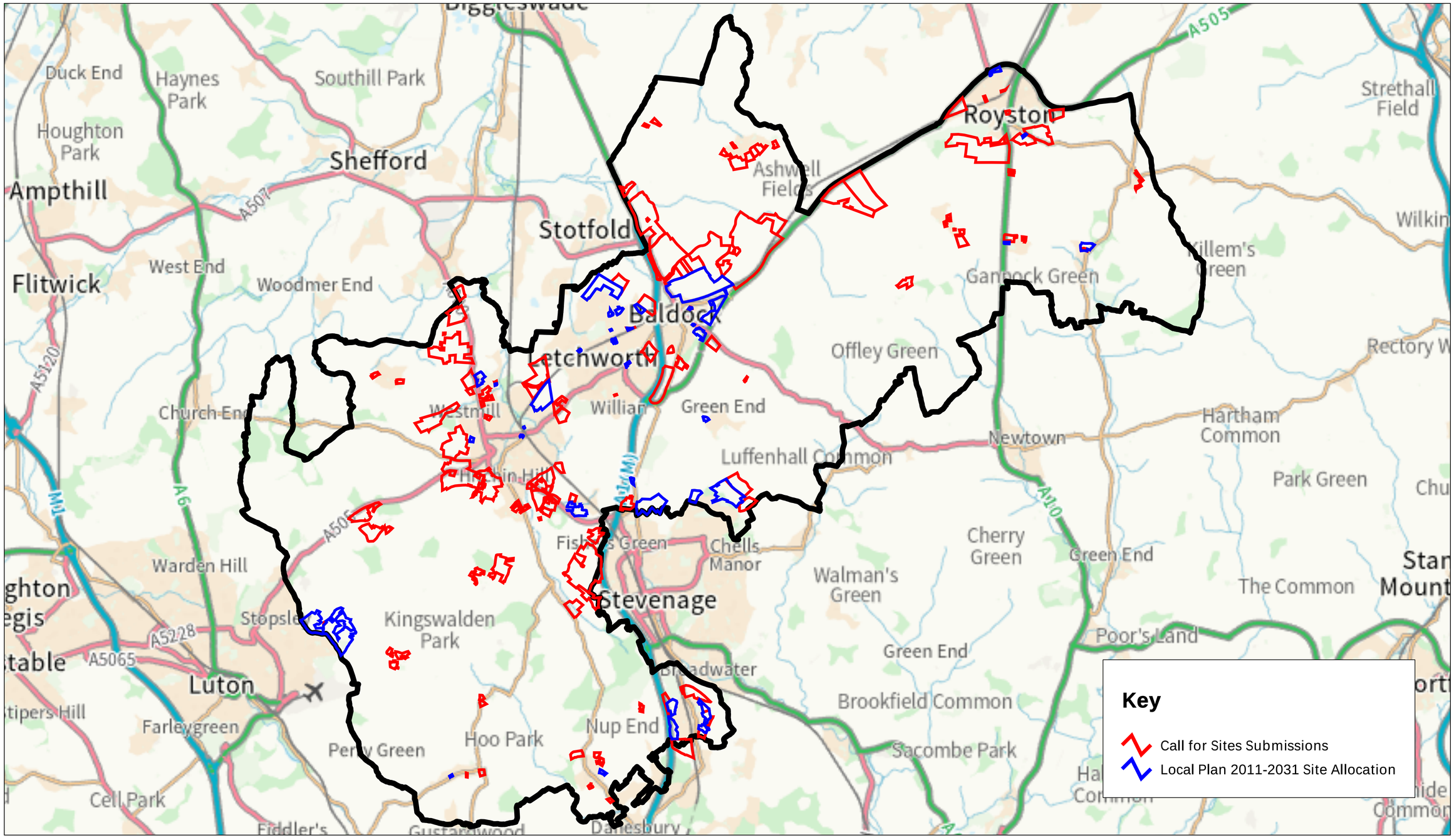
Find out more and have your say

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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Map of Submitted Sites and 2022 Local Plan Allocations (Not Started as of March 2026)

North Herts Council



Scale: 1:185000
Date: 23:09:2026

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